

Harbor Dredging Planned for August

By CHRIS PECK

The long-awaited dredging of 21 acres off Snug Harbor and the mile-long entrance channel could begin in August if bids opened tomorrow are acceptable.

Harbormaster Donald Beers and Town Manager Rocco Longo presented a check Monday for \$660,000 to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Col. Earle Richardson at the New England Corps headquarters in Waltham.

The check represents a \$501,000 state grant and \$168,000, the town's portion of the \$2.6 million dredging and disposal project.

Longo said if the bids fall within the estimate, town officials would be notified that afternoon.

Beers said if work goes according to plan, the 3-month dredging project would not begin until August, leaving the water clear of the equipment during most of the summer's boating season.

"I think we've been given a gift," he said of the timing.

The possible arrival of the dredging itself is also a

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definitely have to be out of their way," he said.

Longo said Duxbury was fortunate to get the approval because there are very few dredging projects under way. He hopes that will contribute to conservative bidding.

"There are not many dredging projects going on and we know we are a small recreation facility, but we have a lot of people using the harbor and we need to make it as safe as possible," he said.

"It's very exciting, especially for Donny who has been working on the project for 15 years," Longo said. "The credit really goes to Donny. We are one of the few communities able to meet every goal set by the federal government. Donny kept up with each step."

Longo also noted there was no trouble selling the costly project at Town Meeting.

"There was no question at Town Meeting about having it done," he said. "I think there were 1,000 people there when it came up and there wasn't any discussion, just a unanimous voice vote."

Disposing of the dredging materials has been the issue which has held up the project, according to Beers, who says he believes the last hurdle has been cleared for this one.

gift, opening up the harbor again where it has been inaccessible.

"It creates a severe public safety issue," said Beers. "Our boats are unable to gain access in or out of the anchorage at low tide."

Longo credits the tenacious Beers with staying with the 15-year application process and meeting the demanding criteria of the corps in order to get the job done.

Most of the harbor is only 2 to 3 feet deep, according to Longo, who says the dredging will deepen the 100-foot wide channel and the 21 acre anchorage to 8 feet.

Beers notes that the Army Corps will have to "dig their way in" just to do the job.

Harbor dredging should take place about every 10 years but almost 20 years have passed since the job as done last in 1977.

Beers said there are 240,000 cubic yards of material to dig up and dispose of this time, compared to 150,000 cubic yards when the harbor was dredged in 1976 and 1977.

Once the job is completed, an additional 3 acres will be added to the mooring space at the harbor, which, Beers said will translate to extra deep water moorings for boats but he does not yet know how many.

Duxbury currently has a 10- to 12-year waiting list for its 160 deep water moorings, and Beers said those people will be offered the space first once it becomes available.

Just how all of this dredging will affect boating in August and early fall, it is hard to say, according to Beers. But he does not expect boat traffic to come to a screeching halt.

"Absolutely not. I foresee being able to manage our activities around them. I have commercial fishing interests and recreational interests. I feel very confident that we are going to work around it," he said.

"They will have to dig their way and we are going to watch and talk to them about what they need. We will

The National Marine Fisheries has apparently sent a letter of approval for the site, section 7 of the biological assessment of the Cape Cod dredge material disposal site off Wellfleet.

"That's all we've been waiting for," he said, a review of whether any endangered species would be affected by the work.

Before 1980, dredging was done about every 10 years and the sand and silt material on the bottom were removed and dumped at an open water clean dredge material disposal site off Gurnet Point.

In 1980, however, all open water disposal was banned, except at one site in Boston, by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs, pending a study, according to Beers.

By 1987, when dredging would have been done again, the corps would not haul the dredge materials to the site off Wellfleet, which was under consideration by the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management, or to the Boston foul area, the only open dumping site left.

In seeking disposal alternatives, Duxbury applied for a state Department of Environmental Management - Rivers and Harbors grant, in search of a suitable disposal site. The Wellfleet site was approved for use in August of 1994.

Beers said the disposal site has been opened to the Duxbury project only from May 15 to Dec. 31 and he originally expected the work would begin early in the boating season.

Following the 3-month harbor project, another 1 to 2 months will be devoted to 4 "piggy back" local projects: the Duxbury Yacht Club pier and floats, 8,000 cubic yards; the Duxbury Town Pier and Floats, 5,000 cubic yards; the Bayside Marine and Floats, 3,000 cubic yards, and Battelle Ocean Sciences Laboratories, 1,600 cubic yards.

The Town of Duxbury will pay \$52,500 for the maintenance dredging at the town pier, \$40,000 for dredging and \$12,500 for towing the materials to the disposal site.